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ABSTRACT

In a sequel to a review of the translation theory of Peter Newmark, it is argued that there is a single best method of translating regardless of whether the translator takes a semantic, communicative, or other approach. Methods of translating and approaches to extracting the sense of the text are clearly distinguished. Newmark is criticized for refusing to distinguish linguistic meaning from extra-linguistic sense, which leads him to advocate literal, even word-for-word, translation and sometimes to become entangled in words. Two dissimilar texts, one demanding a communicative approach (a public notice) and one for which a semantic approach would be best (a poem), are used to illustrate the point. For each text, the purpose, formal features, sense, and sense as semantically structured are examined, and translations into Spanish are analyzed. Contains 10 references. (MSE)

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SEMANTIC AND COMMUNICATIVE TRANSLATION: TWO APPROACHES, ONE METHOD

by Sergio Viaggio
U.N.

This is but an appendix to a much lengthier piece in need of a publisher. In it I discuss --and argue against-- Peter Newmark's view of translation. Newmark denies the possibility of a science of translation and the existence of a single method of translating. In what follows, and on the basis of a few examples, I shall endeavour to show that the method best applied in translating is --or should be-- one and the same, regardless of whether, at the re-expression stage, the translator chooses to follow the semantic or communicative or literal or any other approach. I shall also try and prove that the method itself provides the criteria for giving partial or total preference to any specific approach or combination thereof.

The terms semantic and communicative are the creatures of Peter Newmark; in his last opus, A Textbook of Translation, he comes up with the following gradation:

SOURCE LANGUAGE BIAS	TARGET LANGUAGE BIAS
WORD-FOR-WORD	ADAPTATION
LITERAL	FREE
FAITHFUL	IDIOMATIC
SEMANTIC/COMMUNICATIVE	

What follows is an anthology of Newmark's remarks on the subject:

> "Semantic translation [ST] is personal and individual, follows the thought processes of the author, tends to over-translate, pursues nuances of meaning, yet aims at concision in order to reproduce pragmatic impact. Communicative translation [CT] is social, concentrates on the message and the main force of the text, tends to under-translate, to be simple, clear and brief, and is always written in a natural and resourceful style. A ST is normally inferior to its original, as there is both cognitive and pragmatic loss. ... ST differs from 'faithful translation' only in as far as it must take more account of the aesthetic value (that is, the beautiful and natural sound) of the SL text, compromising on 'meaning' where appropriate so that no assonance, word-play or repetition jars in the finished version. ... CT attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership. ... Only ST and CT fulfil the two main aims of translation, which are first, accuracy, and second, economy. ... 'Equivalent effect' is the desirable result, rather than the aim of any translation, bearing in mind that it is an unlikely result in two cases: (a) if the purpose of the SL text is to

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affect and the TL translation is to inform (or vice versa); (b) if there is a pronounced cultural gap between the SL and the TL text. However, in the CT of vocative texts, equivalent effect is not only desirable, it is essential. (1988b, pp. 45-51)

There is much juicy meat in Newmark's works for the theoretician and the practitioner. Basically, I am in agreement with our author's poles, his main --and capital-- contribution to our discipline, but even here I have my quibbles. Newmark speaks of a putative readership. I am not so sure he is right. Does he really think that Shakespeare addressed his sonnets to himself, or that he wrote his plays for his own pleasure without minding a hoot really how his clientele at The Globe might react? I can buy that a few lyric poets may write solipsistically, but not the likes of Dickens or Pushkin. No one writes a play, a novel or even a love poem without caring whether it can or will be understood. I am not saying that authors write exclusively, or even mainly, **pour la gallerie**, but they do normally have a reader --albeit an ideal one-- very much in mind. They want, basically, to move their audience. We cannot hope to be moved by Shakespeare the way the Globe audience was moved; but we are moved. A translation of Shakespeare must also aim at moving, that's the essential equivalence of effect the translator should attempt; and this is why any translation of a great work of art ought to be itself a great work of art. When Newmark asserts that a CT will be better than a ST, that a CT will normally be better than the original, whilst a ST will be more awkward, that a CT tends to under-translate, whereas a ST tends to over-translate in search of a nuance of meaning, the --I would bet unwanted-- implication is that a CT of Hamlet would be better, if not than Hamlet, then than a ST of Hamlet. Why?

He states that ST over-translates. How can a sonnet in English, with its shorter words, be over-translated in the same amount of Spanish syllables? He avers that a ST will be worse than the source text. If a good poet translates a bad one, the translation is bound to be better than the original. I can't pass judgement, but it is said that Poe sounds better when improved by Baudelaire (Newmark mentions Baudelaire's Poe as well, but he does not say the translations are better). If we do not have many more examples it is due to the fact that not many first class poets have condescended to translate their colleagues.

But those quibbles are relatively minor. Where Newmark and almost every translatologist I know part ways is when he adamantly refuses to distinguish linguistic meaning form extra-linguistic sense, which leads him to advocate literal and even word-for-word translation. Let us listen to him:

> "We do translate words, because there is nothing else to translate; there are only words on the page; there is nothing else there. ... That is one way of looking at translation, which suggests it is basically lexical. This is not so. The basic thought-carrying element of language is its grammar. But since the grammar is expressed only in words, we have to get the words right. The words must stretch and give only if the thought is threatened." (1988b, p. 73)

Asserting that there are nothing but words on the page is either too bold or too timid. Strictly speaking, there is nothing but a series of shapes; interpreting them as words implies seeing an intention behind the contrasts. What most translatologists --myself included-- suggest is just taking one further step and seeing an intention, a sense, behind the words; we assert, therefore, that those words, that linguistic meaning, must themselves be interpreted. That is, basically, what the Parisian interpretive theory --much maligned by Newmark-- boils down to. Newmark becomes thus entangled rather hopelessly in words:

> "I am somewhat of a 'literalist', because I am for truth and accuracy. I think that words as well as sentences and texts have meaning, and you only deviate from literal translation when there are good semantic and pragmatic reasons for doing so, which is more often than not, except in grey texts. ... The single word is getting swamped in the discourse and the individual in the mass of society - I am trying to reinstate them both, to redress the balance." (1988b, pp. xi-xii) "However, in CT as in ST, provided that equivalent-effect is secured, the literal word-for-word translation is not only the best, it is the only valid method of translation." (1988a, p. 39) "For me, a translation can be inaccurate, it can never be too literal." (1988b, p. 72)

Newmark is right in trying to restore the word and the individual; I sympathise fully with him in this respect. But his literalism turns him into a distinguished heir of St Jerome, the semantic vs. communicative dichotomy becoming a XXth century re-incarnation of the **verbum de verbo/sensum de senso** controversy. Of course, ST and CT are but the strictly translational poles of a continuum and, as Newmark points out, there is no purely ST or exclusively CT; both approaches are widely overlapping. Still Newmark advocates using ready equivalents whenever available - provided accuracy and pragmatic effect are amintained; I think the approach is dangerous and does not really work even in otherwise obvious cases. Take such a ready correspondence as 'question' and **'cuestión'**, a ST of 'To be or not to be, that is the question' would presumably be, therefore, **'Ser o no ser, esa es la cuestión'**. To begin with, that is no hendecasyllable (the closest formal equivalent to the English five-foot iamb); but let

us stick to **'cuestión'**. 'Question' is, on the one hand, a 'problem', an 'issue' that is posed, and, on the other, an 'interrogation', a 'question' that is asked. Obviously, both 'meanings' are relevant. So far, so good. **'Cuestión'**, for its part, is more an 'issue' than a 'problem' and has nothing to do with 'questioning'. **'Cuestión'** is, then, very much out of the question. (I am sure Newmark and I see eye to eye so far.) A much better rendition would be **'Ser o no ser, he ahí el dilema'**. No dictionary that I know of gives 'dilemma' as a synonym of 'question', or **'dilema'** as a synonym of **'cuestión'**. But that is what Hamlet faces, is it not?: a 'dilemma'. The 'sense', though, is perfectly and aptly clear with 'question'. Shakespeare could have written, for instance, 'To be or not to be, that's the dilemma', except the whole effect is lost: 'dilemma' is too long; the line consists neatly of nine monosyllabic words and the final dissyllable, the inverted foot in 'that' loses much of its power by becoming 'that's'. Shakespeare chooses 'question' for the very reason he would certainly have rejected it in Spanish. True, **'Ser o no ser, he ahí el dilema'** is not hendecasyllabic either. I, nevertheless, would leave it. The inverted fourth foot is already a departure from strict form in the original (a very convenient alibi), but even without it, I suggest any addition to my version would spoil the music to keep the notes. The syllables in anacrusis, though only three, rather than the required six, end in such abyssal a caesura that the ear doesn't even realise it's been shortchanged. (The ear! So much for written speech.) A possible hendecasyllabisation would be achieved by a most otherwise acceptable archaism - **'Ser o no ser, aqueste es el dilema'**. Look at all we have accomplished: a neat ST, a by all means suitable archaisation of the language via a very much normal demonstrative in classic Spanish, and an unimpeachable classic hendecasyllable to boot... At what price? The stretching of the acoustic arc óoóó // oóooóo as opposed to the abrupt óoóó // òóoóo (as close to Shakespeare's as you can get in this specific instance) wrecks the whole exercise. (A better possibility is **'Ser o no ser, he ahí la disyuntiva'**, but the problem of the extended acoustic arc after the caesura remains.) I do not know whether Newmark would call my translation semantic or communicative, nor do I really care what the label might eventually be. The point is global coherence and cohesion are best served this way than the other, and the most important truth, that of poetry, takes precedence over that of poetics. Newmark demands fidelity towards Shakespeare; I submit that one cannot be faithful to Shakespeare without being also faithful to poetry.

In all probability, my translation can be improved - by a better poet applying the same method, and not by an equal poet through a better method. And that method has been a) having a clear notion of the purpose of the translation; b) understanding the words and analysing thoroughly the semantic and formal features of the original, c) making sense out of them, which in

turn necessitates resorting to the situation (Hamlet is pondering suicide, whether to kill himself or not; if he is of two minds about whether to do either of two things, he is very much in the (two) horns of a dilemma), a sense hinted at by the words, but lying outside of them; d) re-expressing that sense trying to find the best and closest formal and functional equivalence. In this particular instance, the translator has seen and understood that he is dealing with a five-foot iamb with fourth foot inversion, that the only dissyllabic word is 'question', that the inversion produces an unexpected caesura which gives enormous force to 'that'. He has tried --and failed-- to find something parallel in Spanish. He decides --in all conscience-- to make some formal concessions, the most important of which is the abrupt breaking of the metre. He is not happy with it. He invokes as a justification the fact that the metre is also done violence in the original - in that particular line and elsewhere in the monologue. And he submits and defends his translation as the best possible under the circumstances (one of which being his limited talent); e) collating the final version with the original for accuracy, coherence and cohesion. It has been the same method this translator has been applying and teaching for years, the same he uses in the interpreters' booth at the U.N. Security Council and helping his mother buy the right Revlon cream at Macy's: assess his specific communicative task for the specific text in the specific situation, understand the words, decide what weight to give to the specific form, make out the sense, and re-express it in the most suitable form (semantic, communicative, faithful, idiomatic, literal, free) that can be found in the time at his disposal; in short, make the right extra-linguistic sense the right linguistic way.

I shall now try and illustrate my assertion with two widely dissimilar texts. One that cries for a communicative approach (or even an absolutely free one) and another demanding utmost attention to form. Both were analysed earlier this year in my seminar with the faculty at the translation department of the School of Foreign Languages, Havana University.

1)

Happy the Man, and happy he alone,
He, who can call to-day his own:
He, who secure within can say,
To-morrow do thy worst, for I have lived to-day!

2)

Restricted area
Only ticketed bus passengers beyond this point
Violators will be prosecuted

The first is the beginning of Dryden's paraphrase of Horace's Ode, the second a notice posted throughout Manhattan's Port Authority Bus Terminal. One is a beautiful piece of XVII-century English poetry, the other a prosaic and threatening

specimen of XX-century US public English. I suggested the method required respectively to come up with the proper translations is one and the same: deciding on the translator's goal, linguistic analysis of the text, formal analysis of the text, selection of its relevant formal features (both linguistic and aesthetic), analysis of the situation, interpretation of the linguistic message in order to extract sense, re-verbalisation of that sense according to the translator's goal and trying to reproduce as adequately as possible all relevant formal features, and collation of both versions. Let us see.

TEXT 1.

a) Purpose: The stanza is, for my didactic and polemic purposes, a self-contained poem. I want to come up with a poetic translation that will do at least some justice to the original, pay special attention to what I actually do as I translate so I can show my colleagues how I show my students that poetry can indeed be translated, as well as the different processes involved.

b) Formal features: classical combination of five- and six-foot iamb, aabb rhyme scheme. All rhymes oxytonic, but that is typical of English verse, no meaning should be assigned to the fact that there are no paroxytonic endings. The language is quite modern, save, perhaps, for 'Thy'.

c) Sense: a) Macroproposition: The only true happiness lies in intensely living the present. b) Propositions: True happiness lies in 1) enjoying the present; 2) having the certainty that one has lived the present; 3) not fearing the future.

d) The sense as semantically structured: Only that man is happy who can claim possession of to-day, and fearlessly defy destiny or fortune or any personification of the future (a rather 'fickle' and even 'cruel' person at that), by telling him "No matter what doom you may choose to castigate upon me to-morrow, you cannot take away this day from me, and to-day I have lived." Key words and syntagms: 'happy', 'alone', 'call', 'to-day', 'his own', 'secure within', 'thy worst', 'I have lived'. There is a progression from 'Happy the man', through 'Happy he alone' to 'He, who can call to-day his own'; and a somewhat parallel one from 'He, who secure within can say' to 'To-morrow do thy worst, for I have lived to-day'. The whole load of the stanza falls upon the last line. The lines carry a proposition each. The macroproposition is repeated in lines two and four.

I first heard this beautiful four lines at the end of Tony Richardson's film Tom Jones. I didn't know who the author was, but the poem marked me forever. This was in 1965, I think. I wasn't acquainted at all with English literature. But that initial 'Happy the man' and, above all, the final 'for I have

lived to-day' haunted me ever since. Many a time I sought to fill in the middle with my own words. More than twenty years later, in Jamaica, I chanced upon them in Steiner's After Babel. I shall exert myself to come up with the best piece of Spanish poetry I am capable of to convey that sense. I shall also try to find equivalent key words and expressions, since they so beautifully, precisely and economically convey that sense in Dryden.

I know beforehand that I shall be needing many more syllables than those 42 to convey as much semantic information. Spanish offers me, ready-made (and that is a good 'coincidence', nothing else), the roughly equivalent meters: hendecasyllable and alexandrine, themselves masters of our poetics. The last line being the whole point of the original, it must also be the crowning of the translation. Everything else is, then, more or less negotiable; everything else will therefore depend on this line, will have to lead up to it and rhyme with it. This line should be attempted first. An almost literal translation comes readily to mind: **'pues que he vivido hoy'** (I can see Newmark smiling in triumph). Good! It makes exactly the same sense as the equivalent fragment in the original and it is, blissfully enough, a perfect alexandrine hemistich. Maybe I can complete it backwards. 'To-morrow do thy worst', who? Obviously Fortune (fickle, capricious, reckless, cruel...) What could 'her worst' be? Non-life; metaphorical or actual death. **'Me matarás mañana, pues que he vivido hoy'**. Only the de-verbalisation of 'thy worst' can lead to 'You may kill me to-morrow'. **'Pues que'** sounds weak and convoluted; better a simple **'pero'**.

The last line has come off so neatly that I'll endeavour to preserve it no matter what. I desperately need a rhyme for **'hoy'**. Forget 'meaning': aside from pilfered words such as **convoy**, there are only four rhymes, all of them first person singular present indicative: **'doy'**, **'estoy'**, **'voy'** and **'soy'**. Either I stick one of them into any of the lines or I have to relinquish my gorgeous fourth line. Suddenly I see light: the man who can claim to-day as his own says 'I am the owner of this day'; 'I am' = **'soy'**; hallelujah! Now, I have to manage to end any of the other lines with that. (I legitimately discard the aabb scheme, I don't feel bound to keep it, since any other two-rhyme scheme will do - abab or abba.) Now for the next more important feature: the beginning, the 'Happy' that will resolve itself in 'To-day'. I have basically two options, the hendecasyllable and the alexandrine. The hendecasyllable will demand a stress on the sixth syllable or, possibly, on the fourth and eighth. **'Feliz del hombre o-o-ó-o soy'**... **'Feliz del hombre que se dice 'Soy...''**, that **se dice** could do for 'within', but it's too weak; no, not 'to' himself, but 'within', 'secure'... **'Feliz de aquél que puede decir 'Soy...''** Better. But 'alone' is missing; make a note of it. **'Feliz de aquél que puede decir 'Soy / el dueño de hoy'...**; not quite. **'Hoy'** is too much

resounding (one of four '-oy' words in Spanish, remember?) Peter Newmark's assertion notwithstanding, never mind whether Dryden repeats it three times, it is the last one that really matters so I save 'hoy' for the last round.

I need an expression that will denote or connote the present. I think I've got it: **'el dueño del día que me toca...'** Wait, I'm one syllable short (that anacrusis always gets me); how about **'el dueño de este día que me toca'**? Much better; and 'this day' brings us closer to 'to-day' than simply 'the day'. So far I've got **'Feliz de aquél que puede decir "Soy / el dueño de este día que me toca" /... / "Me matarás mañana, ¡pero he vivido hoy!"'** Not bad; not bad at all! Can I fill in the blank decently enough? For that, I need an '-oca' (whatever, in principle, the semantic meaning). If you find my procedure somewhat pedestrian, my only disclaimer is that when I am wrestling with a sonnet of my own, I go about it exactly the same way, except that I can always write whatever I please, rather than mind Dryden or anybody else. (In this I am consistent with my principle that one should translate the way one writes; I use language the same way whether I want to communicate my own sense or someone else's.)

So I must look for a suitable '-oca'. **Loca** dawns upon me. I think I know why: Somewhere in the back of my mind I know that I'm talking about Fortune (later on I'll be checking my translation against the original and discover that Dryden is indeed referring to Fortune; it must have stuck with me, or, more probably, it's the most plausible personification); anyway, now I have **Fortuna loca**. My basic sense will doubtless be **y decir a la Fortuna loca**; but this man must say it so that it will be obvious that he is very much 'secure within'. He must aver bluntly, daringly, defiantly, assuredly... **'Espetar'** is an apt verb. **'Espetar en la cara'**, or, more nobly, **'en el rostro'**. Let me see: **'Feliz de aquél que puede decir "Soy / el dueño de este día que me toca" / y espetar en el rostro a la Fortuna loca / "Me matarás mañana, ¡pero he vivido hoy!"'** Good boy! Now, remember about the 'alone'; perhaps **'Feliz sólo de aquél que puede decir "Soy...** My first version respects the metre; this one turns the first line into an alexandrine; also, both hemistiches are oxytonic; it would sound better if the first one were not (to my ears, of course, but then those are the only ones that count for the nonce). A possible solution is becoming more literal and go for **Feliz solo del hombre que puede decir "Soy..."**, but **el hombre** is too specific. I listen to all three variants repeatedly in my mind and decide that 'alone' adds a crucial element: there is no happiness <u>but</u> the present one; I hadn't quite grasped it initially (too much attention to words and sounds, probably). The third line also turns out to be an alexandrine. It would not be a problem, but that now, instead of the last line standing out, the second one gets shortchanged. Can I shorten it, so that symmetry is restored? I think of **'y decir fiero a la Fortuna**

loca'; maybe Spanish had at that time kept the meanings of 'proud' and 'fierce' side by side with that of 'wild', as opposed to to-days's 'ugly'. No such luck. I put back my Martín Alonso disappointedly on its shelf. I rummage through my inner files, I run into 'altivo'... hm... Back to the dictionaries. On my way to the bookshelf I ponder 'gallardo'. Julio Casares will probably have an adjective meaning both 'proud' and 'valiant'. Sure enough: 'bravo'. My search is over... until further notice. (Newmark is again right when he warns that a translation is never really finished!) So my latest update becomes:

Feliz sólo de aquél que puede decir "Soy
el dueño de este día que me toca"
y espetar bravo a la Fortuna loca
"Me matarás mañana, pero he vivido hoy!"

["Happy only he who can say "I / Am the the master of this day that's been alloted to me" / And bravely say to fickle Fortune / "You may kill me to-morrow, but I have lived to-day!"]

With it, my last line also stands out. My next step will be cutting that first alexandrine short. By the way, Peter Newmark hits the nail one more time squarely on the head when he asserts that the translator seeks basically to reproduce the effect the poem had on him rather than on its readership. I wish I had been the one to write those lines; through love and gratitude I've made them my own, and that is why I wanted to translate them in the first place, and that is how I want to translate them, as my own, so that others will be able to understand, marvel at and be moved by them.

TEXT 2:

a) Purpose: Again, I want to show my students how to approach this other kind of text.

b) Formal features: A public notice. Its sole aim is to keep non-ticketed people from entering the platform. It must accomplish the same goal in Spanish. It must also fit the roughly two-by-two foot area and legibly so. Everything else may be negotiated.

c) Sense: You can't go through unless you have a ticket.

d) Sense as semantically structured: A general 'title', the notice itself with a host of redundancies, a threat.

If with Dryden I was after an equivalent piece of poetry with the equivalent effect of aesthetically sensitising the reader to the same sense, now I will seek an equivalent piece of

public noticing with the equivalent effect of keeping the unticketed off the platform. The original has the typical American 'Or else' tagged along. Notices throughout Spain and Latin America are less ominous. 'Restricted area' is redundant. Spanish lacks the universal label. We do indeed have '**Zonas restringidas**', '**Zonas de acceso restringido**', '**Zonas vedadas**' and the like, but very seldom do they encompass bus platforms; we tend to reserve them to spaces more consequential, such as military bases and atomic plants, where you can't just buy a ticket and get in. Putting anything 'equivalent' in our notice will ipso facto spoil global adequateness. We must follow text typology and be guided by equivalent notices. We therefore do blithely away with 'Restricted area'. Next, the meat: 'Only ticketed bus passengers beyond this point'. 'Bus' is, again, situationally redundant: no, an ocean liner ticket or a ticket to a movie will not do: you need a <u>bus</u> ticket (presumably --it is not explained-- a ticket for a bus leaving from <u>that</u> platform and on <u>that</u> day, only <u>later</u>). We will give our readers the benefit of the doubt and trust them to make all of those inferences all by themselves. How does Spanish normally go about saying that only ticketed passengers may go through? By forbidding the rest from passing: '**Prohibido el acceso sin boleto**' - or '**billete**', or '**pasaje**' [No access without a ticket], depending on who one is translating for (the notice applies exclusively to people, and people without a ticket are not 'passengers'). What about the 'Beyond this point'? Again we will trust our readers to guess that it is not beyond the point twenty yards behind or that other one thirty feet yonder, but this point, exactly where the notice hangs, or, rather, the gate next to it. And the 'Violators will be prosecuted'? Again, that's the typical American 'Or else!' (the sense meant by the meanings carried by the words). Spanish tends to show its fangs less. Besides, it lacks also this time around the hypernyms 'violators' and 'prosecuted'. The closest 'semantic' equivalent would be '**infractores**' and '**enjuiciados**', but it sounds so preposterous in Spanish that something different is called for, such as '**so pena de multa**', or '**todo infractor será multado**'. I, for one, would leave it at that and be done with it; but if my client insists, I would add, for instance, the friendlier '**evite multas**'. My translation, then, reads:

Prohibido el acceso sin billete
Evite multas

[No access without a ticket / Avoid fines]

Newmark would call my first translation semantic and this latter one communicative (or perhaps even 'free'). He calls these opposing approaches 'methods'. Once again, I suggest they are indeed different approaches, but not methods. I prefer to reserve 'method' to characterise the sequence of operations involved in each case: taking stock of the translator's purpose;

appraising the situation; analysing the text globally; analysing its linguistic form, lexically, syntactically, stylistically, acoustically, etc. as relevant; extracting the overall sense (the macroproposition) and its constituents as well as the relationship between sense and meaning, meaning and form; retaining for the nonce the de-verbalised sense, i.e. sense independently of any specific linguistic objectivation in any language (the explanation of sense above could have been in Spanish or German or Korean); the re-verbalisation or re-expression of that sense in the target language under the guise of a suitable text (another poem or a new notice, since adequateness is ultimately measured text to text); the comparison of the translation with the original to double check for sensic (and not only semantic) accuracy and formal fidelity, as well as for inner coherence and cohesion.

So the translation of Dryden is semantic, that of the notice - communicative. I am sure Newmark would agree with me and my versions (or at least the approach behind them) in both cases. This, I think, is a crucial point. I do not really believe Newmark and I would go about translating any text differently, but, again, I am indeed very much afraid our students would. To begin with, I do not start by saying Dryden should be translated semantically no matter what; what I am saying is that <u>if</u> the translator's purpose is to do justice to Dryden the poet, he must come up with his best poetic effort. I am also saying that, although in the original every single word weighs, they do not carry the <u>same</u> weight. I am saying further that the translator cannot but take complete stock of every single SL word in itself; indeed, but much more so as it relates to the poem as a whole, since it is there for a purpose larger --if not other-- than its own semantic or acoustic semblance. I am stressing, moreover, that the translator ought to assume that Dryden was not merely after rhythm and rhyme, but was using both to stress and give emotive and aesthetic power to a communicative intention, itself based on reason and emotion. I call it sense (Newmark would probably insist upon naming it 'meaning', but that is a matter of 'semantics'). That 'intention' or 'thought' or 'sense' or 'meaning' must be thoroughly grasped and assimilated. Only such a comprehension will make the translator realise the importance of the last line, and particularly its very last word. He must then try and keep that balance in his version.

Trying, of course, does not assure being able to. In Spanish, **hoy** is conveniently monosyllabic (a genuine exception). In Russian it would be **sevódnja**; whatever the translator's prowess, he'll never achieve the <u>same</u> effect (and, yes, we are very much after equivalent effect - aesthetic effect, that is). That 'reason' will further tell the translator that between 'Happy' and 'to-day' well-nigh everything is more or less negotiable. He is on his verbal own. He must find a suitable poetic bridge between those two shores. De-verbalisation,

forgetting the 'words' in the original, is absolutely essential: they will but hamper one's own search. In my version, neither **Fortuna**, nor **loca**, nor **espetar**, nor **rostro**, nor **matar** are 'semantically' connected with the original; **soy el dueño de este día** is an extremely free rendering of 'call to-day his own'; nowhere do we find any semantic vestiges of 'secure' or 'within' or 'thy' or 'worst'. Indeed, if Spanish and my talent had allowed for a semantically closer translation I would have definitely gone for it. But semantic closeness should never be the main purpose of the translator - let alone the only one; what he should at all times strive for is equivalent aesthetic effect: A compromise between linguistic meaning and linguistic form that will bring him closest to the symbiosis of truth and beauty every work of art represents.

Newmark himself has gone from dichotomising the twain to realising they are but one: an excessively 'free' translation may well give much of its own beauty, but it won't be the original's. A slavish, purely 'semantic' --i.e. meaning-bound-- one, much of the 'semantic' truth and none of the beauty. By the by, I'd much rather appreciate the former: good poetry is always welcome, even if translationally unsuccessful. No, I wouldn't consider Dryden's paraphrase a translation; I don't accept his Horace (nor does he: he calls his version a paraphrase), but I love his Dryden! As Newmark would undoubtedly --and again justifiably-- point out, I haven't been able to forget any of the key words. Certainly not! Because they are key functionally and not of themselves. And I am ready to grant much more: I confess to having forgotten none of them, not even 'the'. What I did was to try and free myself from their haunting presence... I cannot write well when I have some other language watching me. That is what I mean by de-verbalisation; I really cannot tell whether non-linguistic thought is actually possible; I believe it is, but lack the biological, physiological and psychological knowledge to venture a hypothesis. All I suggest any translator, including Newmark, should do is divorce sense from any specific linguistic objectivation and be, in principle, open to give it any plausible linguistic guise, even zero (as in 'Restricted area' and 'Violators will be prosecuted'). No, except for the cases of meta-linguistic translation and the like, I do not believe for a moment that a translation, any translation, should read like one. Let the reader be aware (situationally) that it is not Dryden but Dryden-through-Viaggio, but there is no reason for the presence of linguistic clues.

Newmark states --and, as usual, he is perfectly right-- that if the original departs from normal usage, so should the translation (if possible,that is); I have attempted to translate Mayakovski with compound rhymes. It is devilishly difficult in Spanish, since a) our language doesn't have nearly half the consonant sounds and nearly a quarter their possible

combinations, and b) there are very few proparoxytonic words. Take for instance the ending of Jorosho:

Ljet do sta rastí
nam bjes stárosti.
God ot góda rastí
náshej bódrosti.
Sláv'te mólot i stikh
zjemlí mólodosti.

[May we grow to be a hundred years old - without old age. / May it grow from year to year - our dauntlessness. / Hail the hammer and verse - of the land of youthfulness.]

It is impossible to come up with anything nearly as effective, but one can --and should-- be as bold; only the same boldness won't carry the poet phonetically that far in Spanish. Here are some of my exercises with compound rhymes (and there is no way of compounding more than two at a time, one of them necessarily an unstressed monosyllabic proposition, pronoun or article):

La pena mi mano lame
y echada a mis pies está. Me
mira con ojos tiernos
que sólo a mí saben ver. Nos
une esta tarde gris. Te
recuerdo mudo y triste,
triste, mudo, gris y solo,
que a la cita no acudiste
y mi pobre cuore no lo
alcanza a paliar con nada.
No es lluvia de afuera la que
empaña ya mi mirada
y los versos que me saque
sabrán a pena mojada.

(Sorrow licks my hand / at my feet it is lying. Me / it looks at with tender eyes / that only me can see. Us / unites this grey afternoon. You / I remember silent and sad, / sad, silent, grey and lonely, / for you did not keep our date / and my poor heart not it / can sooth it with anything. / It is not an outside rain that which / bedims now my gaze / and whatever verses it may bring out of me / shall have the taste of wet sorrow.)24/

No match for **'mólot i stikh'** / **'mólodosti'**, I dare say! Of course, a poet of greater caliber might astound us, but will he be able and willing to translate Mayakovski? As a poet in his own right, he would --I dare venture-- try and put himself in Mayakovski's shoes and guess how the great Russian would have gone about making the same sense had he had at his disposal the

possibilities offered by Spanish while being denied those available in Russian. And one last thing. Suppose such a Spanish language poet cum translator from Russian did come along; he still won't be able to make **'martillo y verso'** ['hammer and verse/line'] rhyme with **'juventud'** ['youth/youthfullness']. What would a 'semanticist' do, go for fidelity to meaning, choose faithfulness to form, or compromise in the name of poetic sense?

The reader is kindly besought to hold his breath and watch out for the real thing, Contesting Peter Newmark, and keep his fingers crossed that someone will find it in his heart to publish it.

NOTE

*/ Notice that this and the one above are strictly meta-linguistic translations, since my purpose is not the same that governed the original writing (as Newmark put it, the author's was to affect, mine to inform).

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